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AN APPEAL TO  
The Lutheran Church  
of America

FROM

THE MOHAMMEDAN  
WORLD WITH ITS  
200,000,000 IMMORTAL  
:: :: SOULS :: ::

OUR DUTY *and* PRIVILEGE:  
The 3,500,000 Mohammedan Kurds  
for Christ



1915

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Orient Mission Society



## Our Mission Field

AS the Kurds are Mohammedans, we shall here refer briefly to Arabia, the cradle of Mohammedanism. In Gen. 10:30 it is called "A mount of the East." Arabia is a peninsula, and is a connecting link between Asia and Africa. It is bounded on the west by the Red Sea; on the south by the Indian Ocean; on the east by the Persian Gulf and the River Euphrates; and on the north by Mesopotamia. The country rises gradually to a mountain plateau of rugged beauty. Here checkered fields and beautiful palm gardens form a fascinating panorama. The great Arabian desert measures 650 miles from north to south, and 850 miles from east to west, and covers one-half of Arabia. The climate is mild, and the country has a great abundance of health-springs.

To the north of this territory lies Kurdistan with its ancient city of Arbela, near which Alexander defeated Darius in 331 B. C. Kurdistan—now no longer a political unit—lies between 34 and 38 north latitude and 32 and 47 east longitude, and is now partly under Turkish and partly under Persian rule. The city of Soujboulag, with its 20,000 inhabitants, lies approximately in the same latitude as Nashville, Tenn., and has a most interesting location. About 200 miles to the north lies Mt. Ararat; about 250 miles to the south is the site of ancient Babylon; and only a short distance to the west lies the ancient city of Nineveh.

## THE PEOPLE

In Arabia live the descendants of Shem's great-grandson, Joktan. (Gen. 10:21 et seq.) The word "Arabia" may mean desert dwellers. Many Arabians are nomads—wanderers—others are farmers and tradesmen. The country became an asylum for Jews and later for Christians. Jews immigrated to Mecca during the reign of David. The Arabians early became idolaters, but influenced by the Jews some became Theists, and believers in an existence after death. The son of Hagar, Ishmael, cast his lot with the Arabians. Gen. 16:11-12 tells the future of Hagar's son, and in 21:18 is recorded God's promise to make of him a great people of twelve tribes. Gen. 25:11-18 tells that these twelve tribes "dwelt from Havila unto Shur," where they built towns and castles.

## KURDISTAN

Thus was effected an amalgamation of the ancient Arabians—the descendants of Shem—with the descendants of Abraham through the son of the bondwoman.

It is due to this that the Mohammedans also regard Abraham as their father. Their rule of circumcision is Gen. 17:25, which places the age of the child at thirteen years, as against the eight-day age with the Jews.

## KURDS

If the words of Gen. 16:12, "And he will be a wild man," are true of any tribe more than of others, it must be so for the Kurds. They are

the most savage of all the Asiatics. They are known as thieves and robbers, and have frequently persecuted Oriental Christians. They hail from the Kurdish mountains. Though many are lawless bandits, acknowledging no authority, they are divided into many tribes, all known for bravery and vengeance. They are a people hard to classify ethnologically; most likely they constitute a mixture of Assyrians, Arabians, Babylonians, and Chaldeans. In their language scholars say that the Arabian, Persian, and Syrian elements can easily be traced.

## MOHAMMEDANS

Few Christians have made a study of Mohammedanism. It is more bold and aggressive, more persistent and obstinate than any creed met with in heathen lands. Every Mohammedan is a mission worker, and claims the Orient for Islam. There is an awakening, a regeneration, among the Mohammedans. Islam recedes politically, but makes inroads religiously. For one Mohammedan converted to Christianity, there are one hundred heathen converted to Islam. The Mohammedans are aiming to make Islam the religion of the whole world.

The Kurds are Mohammedans, and are divided equally between the Sunni and the Shi'i denominations.

Mohammedanism has many dark sides; its religion and politics are one and the same. Its civilization is not far in advance of barbarism. Its institutions of polygamy and slavery are suggestive of its inhumane spirit. A man may have four wives and any number of concubines.

Kidnapping is prevalent. The stolen are sold. At the sales a maiden is disposed of for from \$150 to \$200, and a man for from \$75 to \$200. Yet moral strength and religious devotion are often shown by many intelligent and fine personalities. Such we find especially in the "Young Turk Movement." Mohammedans are waking up from a long stupor. They are fast realizing that there are other means of propagating their faith than the sword. Mr. Zwemer mentions no less than eighteen magazines devoted to the subject and study of the Mohammedan world. Of these, two are published in Berlin, one in Paris, one in England, one in Peking, one in Cairo, and one in St. Petersburg. The one last mentioned is considered the best of the Mohammedan publications. Cairo has 86 newspapers, which indicates that Mohammedan illiteracy is not as universal as we sometimes are apt to think.

"Not only do we face the whole Mohammedan world, not only do we know the Mohammedan world as we have never known it before, but *today we are facing a political situation that is absolutely unprecedented.*"

## THE MISSIONARY CHALLENGE

There is a cry from the Mohammedan world for teachers, preachers, and physicians. Who will heed the cry? Who will say, "Here am I"? Here are mine, all for the glory of God and the good of mankind. Our day of opportunity is now. God wills it. May we say, *His holy will shall be my holy law*. I will give all into God's hand.

We, the Children of the Reformation, owe

a debt to the Mohammedan world. Indirectly Islam favored the Reformation by keeping Charles V so busy that he could not stamp out the fire which Luther kindled. Now let us pay the debt we owe by giving the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Mohammedan world. It is also a debt of love we owe to a big Savior and to a big world.

## THE BIG WORLD

According to the most recent estimate the Mohammedans are distributed as follows:—

India . . . . .	67,500,000
Dutch East India.....	35,250,000
Russian Empire . . . . .	20,000,000
Arabia . . . . .	2,250,000
Afghanistan . . . . .	5,000,000
Persia . . . . .	4,500,000
China . . . . .	8,500,000
South America . . . . .	166,000
Australia . . . . .	19,000
North America (Pacific Coast and New England) . . . . .	8,000
Other places . . . . .	56,907,000
Total . . . . .	<hr/> 200,000,000

These figures may be taken as quite correct. The Mohammedans claim 300,200,000, which is too large a number. Truly a large field, and in this field the Lutheran Church has done no work, except that which is being done by the Inter-Synodical Evangelical Lutheran Orient Mission Society.

## THE MISSION SLOGANS

When the missionary conference met at Cairo, Egypt, in 1906, there were 29 missionary

societies represented, and the following appeal was issued:

"We, who have assembled from many Christian and Mohammedan lands, and who know Islam in all its phases, do most earnestly entreat the entire Protestant Church with renewed zeal and energy to take up work among the Mohammedans. We ask you to further and strengthen this work: First, by preparing and sending out more laborers among the Mohammedans; second, by flooding the whole Mohammedan world with Gospel literature; third, by occupying every strategic centre with Protestant missions; fourth, by inaugurating a world-wide spiritual crusade for the conquest of Islam, in order to put a stop to the proselyting influence of Islamism upon the world, and win the Mohammedans for Christ."

In 1913 a conference for work among the Mohammedans was held in the city of New York. It was a representative gathering, well acquainted with the Moslem problems. Speakers at this conference emphasized the fact that there are three centres of Mohammedanism, viz: Constantinople, the political centre; Mecca, the religious centre; and Cairo, the intellectual centre. The political centre has been weakened more and more. The religious centre will soon be invaded and broken up. The intellectual centre is shaken by conflict between the ancient and the modern educational factors. Everywhere in Moslem lands reform movements are seen and felt. If *brain, heart, and lungs* of the Mohammedan world be destroyed, then Mohammedanism will die.



At the conference in Cairo in 1906 one motto read: "*Africa for Christ.*" This was the Christian motto. Later, a Moslem conference was held. Its motto was: "*Asia and Africa for Mohammed.*" There can be no compromise; no half and half. It must be either Jesus or Mohammed; the Cross or the Crescent. Will the Church of Christ devise ways and means to combat Mohammedanism?

In spite of all setbacks, the day of opportunity has come. Christian missionaries are at work in Arabia, Persia, and Turkey. The Bible is translated into all the languages of western Asia. Our own missionary, Rev. L. O. Fossum, is editing the four Gospels for the large Kurdish tribe which centers about Soujboulag, our mission centre. Evangelical missions alone can stem the tide of Mohammedanism. Mohammedans are fatalists, and hence most formidable in war. We must Christianize the heathen, or they will heathenize us. We must give the Moslem world the Bible instead of the Koran, the law of the Lord instead of the Sheriat.

## LUTHERAN MOHAMMEDAN MISSION

The Inter-Synodical Evangelical Lutheran Orient Mission Society was organized in Chicago, Ill., in 1910, and was incorporated in 1913. Its object is work among the Mohammedan Kurds in Persia. The leading spirit in the movement was Rev. L. O. Fossum, who had been in the Orient looking over the field.

When the World Conference of Missions met in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1911, the chief burden was: "The evangelization of all non-

Christian people." Eight commissions had done preliminary work, and made a complete survey of the mission fields of the world. The unoccupied fields were apportioned as far as it could be done among the Evangelical church bodies, and our society was made responsible for the mission among the Mohammedan Kurds, who number about 3,500,000. At the organization meeting of our society, pastors from 12 Lutheran church bodies were present and took part in the deliberations which resulted in the formation of the society. Friendly greetings were received from the General Lutheran Conference of Europe, which then met at Upsala, Sweden. As far as we know, our society is the only Lutheran organization carrying on mission work among Mohammedans. We are the only society carrying on work among the three and a half million Kurds. The Kurds must be converted to the Lutheran faith, or they will not be converted to Christianity at all—unless the Lutheran Church should say that it wants the Lutheran Orient Mission Society to surrender the field to other Protestant or Catholic missions.

In our effort to evangelize the Kurds we are affiliated with the Hermannsburgers of Germany, and we hope to affiliate with Lutheran societies in other Lutheran lands.

So far our mission force has consisted of three missionaries sent from America, and three from Europe. Two more were on their way to the field and came only as far as Constantinople. Being Germans, they had to return to their homes, as the husband was a member of the "Landwehr" and was called into the service of the "Fatherland." At present our mission is sharing the fate of many other missions. But our trust is in the Lord. It is His work, and

He shall prosper it. But we must not be idle, and use the present complications as an excuse for lack of activity. We must now prepare to take up the work with renewed force when the war-cloud has passed over. That will be the golden time of missions in the Orient. Let us be ready to make the most of it for the Lord.

## CAN THERE BE ANY EXCUSE FOR INDIFFERENCE?

Has not each synod enough with its own missions? No doubt we all have all we can do for the present, each in our respective fields. But shall no new imperative enterprise be undertaken until the present task has been done? That is not the way our synods have done up to the present time. And is there any reason why they should begin to do so now? Is Matt. 28:18 to be interpreted as limited to what we now have? Did the great missionary models give the Church of our day such a precedent? On the contrary, does not the Word of God indicate that we must hasten to bring the Gospel to all men? Paul did not stay in Pamphylia, Galatia, and Lydia till all the Jews there were converted to Christianity. He hastened on to Macedonia—where God gave him a call through a special vision,—thence to Achaia, and hoped even to reach Italy and Spain. He was impelled by the Divine Spirit, to which he yielded implicit obedience. This did not give him permission to excuse himself by saying: I have enough to do here in Pamphylia; I can and will do nothing for those in Macedonia until I have finished here.

Is there not a danger that this concern for our particular field becomes an excuse for unwillingness to render obedience to the Savior's last command? There is a spirit of Mammon-

ism, which says that these new claims have no right to present themselves, and "our special fields" must be protected by excluding the appeal from such fields. This is a mistaken idea which is not only terribly inconsistent with the Word of God, but is also inconsistent with the facts of history. No congregation has ever been ruined by too much work for missions, either by the pastor or by other missionary advocates. But many congregations suffer from lethargy and atrophy due to ignorance regarding missionary claims and opportunities. May God deliver our Christian Church from the unchristian timidity which limits God's claims on it, to that which each church calls its own at the present time!

Who would ever say that the Jewish mission or the Santhal mission has caused a falling off in the receipts of our synodical mission treasuries? Is it not rather so, that those congregations which have contributed most freely to these missions are the congregations that have become the strongest supporters of the missions in their respective synods? These are facts and not assumptions. These other missions have been instruments in God's hands to create a true sense of missions—a sense which can never take possession of congregations which have their sphere of information and influence limited by that which is their own special field. Those who close their ears to the call from God's vineyard, do so at the risk of losing great spiritual blessings.

Is it reasonable that the appeal from 200,000,000 Mohammedans, which now for the first time comes to the Lutheran Church in a tangible form, shall work as a check on the contributions to those missions earlier established? If that is to be the case, the course of missions must change into other lines than it has followed

before. Can this be a Macedonian call to which the Church ought to turn a deaf ear? Is this the bleeding Lazarus that we can let lie unaided without bringing God's displeasure upon us? Can we find a valid reason—not an excuse—for not listening to this call from the unchristian world? Can the foe of God and missions make any Christian, who takes God's command seriously, let personal preferences or animosities dictate his attitude to a people which needs Christ as much as do the Kurds? Enmity may do so, but never the spirit of Christ.

We are assured that every true Christian knows what Isaiah 54:2-3 means in this connection. "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and the left; and thy seed shalt inherit the Gentiles and make the desolate cities to be inhabited."

Let our people be educated with regard to the Mohammedan world. Let there be systematic co-operation of members of the Lutheran Church with our Mohammedan mission board, for the Moslem problem concerns us all. Read Rev. Ph. Lamartine's "An Appeal to the Church in Behalf of the Mission to the Mohammedans," and Fossum's "Mohammedanism"—a Norwegian publication.

Our hope and confidence in this mission is not in ourselves; not in money or material; not in acquired experiences or methods and agencies; not in brilliancy and popularity of leaders; not in statesmen and politicians; not in enthusiastic forward movements; not in inspiring watchwords; "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zech. 4:6).

## A FORM OF BEQUEST

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*I, ..... of the County  
of ..... and State of .....  
being of lawful age and sound mind, do make,  
publish and declare my last Will and Testament  
to be as follows:*

*FIRST. I direct that all my just debts and  
funeral expenses be first paid out of my estate.*

*SECOND. I bequeath and devise to:.....  
.....*

*THIRD. I bequeath and devise to.....  
.....*

*FOURTH. I bequeath and devise to THE  
INTER-SYNODICAL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN  
ORIENT MISSION SOCIETY.....  
.....*

*I direct that this legacy be paid to the said  
Inter-Synodical Evangelical Lutheran Orient  
Mission Society unconditionally, for its own use,  
and not in trust, but advise the Board of  
Trustees of said Society to expend the same as  
follows: . . . . .  
.....*

*FIFTH. All the rest and residue of my  
estate, both real and personal, and wheresoever  
situated, I bequeath and devise as follows:.....  
.....*

*SIXTH. I nominate and appoint.....  
....., of ....., the executor of  
this my last Will and Testament.*

*IN WITNESS WHEREOF. I have pub-  
lished and declared this to be my last Will and  
Testament and hereunto subscribe my name at  
....., this ..... day of .....,  
19....*

*The foregoing instrument was subscribed by  
....., the testator herein  
named, at the time and place therein stated and  
published and declared by him to be his last  
Will and Testament, and at the same time and  
place, at his request, and in his presence, and in  
the presence of each other, we hereunto sub-  
scribed our names as witnesses.*

*....., Residing at.....  
....., Residing at.....*

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